

Fulbright Wars On 3 Fronts With Senate Conservatives

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(Washington Bureau of The Sun)

Washington, Aug. 3 — Senator J. William Fulbright (D., Ark.) is the central figure in a three-ring battle in the Senate.

He is engaged in a bitter dispute with a group of conservatives, led by Senator Thurmond (D., S.C.), over a move to restrict the public speeches of certain right-wing officers of the armed forces.

He is conducting an extended argument with Senator Goldwater (R., Ariz.) a leading GOP conservative, over the import of Goldwater's doctrine of "total victory" in the war with communism.

Deep Feelings Involved

He is taking on most of the conservatives en masse in the foreign aid debate, in which he will try to obtain passage of the Kennedy Administration's five-year economic assistance program.

These three battles, in all of which deep personal feelings are involved, have raised Fulbright to

a position of new prominence in the Senate. As chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Fulbright already was in a position of power, and as a foremost liberal he often has been the target of the conservatives, but he probably has never before been engaged in so many arguments at the same time.

Fulbright's liveliest battle — at least until the foreign aid bill debate gets under full steam — is with Thurmond, over the issue of the right-wing generals. In the Senate argument, which has been going on intermittently during the last week, Thurmond has had support from Goldwater, Mundt (R., S.C.), Bridges (R., N.H.) and Curtis (R., Neb.).

This argument is over a long memorandum that Fulbright sent last month to Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defense. In it the Senator called attention to a number of public cold war

seminars, held in different cities in the United States, in which military officers took part.

The content, no doubt has varied from program to program," said Fulbright's memorandum, "but running through all of them is a central theme that the primary, if not exclusive, danger to this country is internal Communist infiltration."

"Past and current international difficulties are often attributed to this, or ascribed to 'softness,' 'sell-outs,' 'appeasements,' etc. Radical Right-wing speakers dominate the programs.

"The thesis of the nature of the Communist threat often is developed by equating social legislation with socialism, and the latter with communism. Much of the Administration's domestic legislative program, including continuation of the graduated income tax, expansion of social security (particularly medical care under social security), Federal aid to education, etc., under this philosophy would be characterized as steps toward communism.

Charges Of Waste Noted

"This view of the Communist menace renders foreign aid, cultural exchanges, disarmament negotiations and other international programs as extremely wasteful, if not actually subversive. This is a most moderate characterization."

Fulbright cited several such meetings and speeches to support his point. Subsequently the Defense Department issued a directive that was intended, as explained by Roswell Gilpatric, Deputy Secretary of Defense, to require military personnel in their public appearances to "confine themselves to military matters."

Thurmond, himself a major general in the Army reserve, soon began to denounce the directive and the Fulbright memorandum.

"The infamous attacks on our military leaders and the attempts to discredit them and to intimidate them to the extent that they will neglect their responsibility to inform the American public and personnel under their command constitute a threat to our very existence," Thurmond said at one point in the argument.

He asserted that the country's military leaders have been trying to lay the foundation for an understanding of communism and the scope of the cold war. Thurmond said further that the first attacks on the generals were made in a communist newspaper.

Goldwater referred to Fulbright's memorandum as "shocking" and urged a full investigation.

"I do not know," said Goldwater, "perhaps one must be a Rhodes Scholar in order to be able to state what is good for the republic of ours."

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